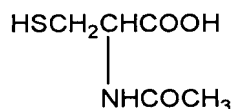


In the Office Action, the Examiner has requested that Applicant file an Information Disclosure Statement ("IDS"). Accordingly, Applicant has enclosed herewith an IDS citing the references cited in the specification, a PTO Form 1449 and the fee pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(c)(2).

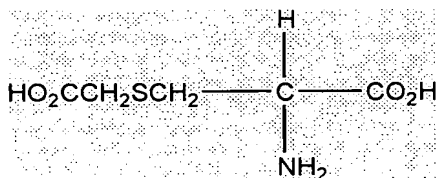
Also in the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected the subject matter of Claim 1 as being anticipated by Merck Index Entry No. 82 for acetylcysteine. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Essentially, the Examiner asserts that Merck Index Entry No. 82 discloses the claimed preventive.

Applicant, though, respectfully submits that Merck Index Entry No. 82 does not disclose, teach or suggest the preventive claimed in Claim 1. In particular, Merck Index Entry No. 82 shows N-Acetyl-L-cysteine having the following structure:



Claim 1 shows the active ingredient in the claimed preventive having the following structure:



It is clearly evident from the two structures that Merck Index Entry No. 82 for N-Acetyl-L-cysteine (hereinafter "Entry No. 82") is significantly different from the preventive of Claim 1. First, Entry No. 82 requires a substituent for one of the hydrogens in the amino group whereas the claimed preventive has no substituent for either of the hydrogens of the amino group. Second, Entry No. 82 has no substituent for the hydrogen of the mercapto group whereas the claimed preventive requires a $\text{CH}_2\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ substituent for the hydrogen in the mercapto group. Accordingly, it is clear that Merck Index Entry No. 82 does not anticipate the preventive claimed in Claim 1 and this rejection should be withdrawn.

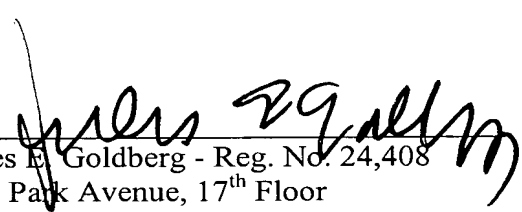
In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance and favorable reconsideration and prompt notice to that affect are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

REED SMITH, LLP

March 19, 2002

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